

FISCAL YEAR 2017
GENERAL CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

a **YEAR** *in*
REVIEW





The mission of the General Church is to help people live a heavenly life through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming.

Letter from the Bishop

This year the General Church had a renewed focus on increasing communication with people. The Rev. Peter Buss, Jr. and I have done extensive travel to many congregations and met many wonderful people. The Church increased our communications through e-newsletters and cards, sharing all that is going on all over the church. Our Education and Outreach efforts were focused on reaching and connecting with more people and helping them live a heavenly life "through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming." The year ended with the clergy meetings held in Bryn Athyn, which allowed 90 ministers to study and collaborate. It was an honor to preside over the gathering of ministers. Read further to see some highlights of the work of the Church.

I have announced my intended retirement in June of 2019. This advance notice will provide for an orderly transition. Please give counsel to the clergy regarding your sense of the needs of the Church. They will gather in June of 2018 to make a nomination. It will first go to the General Church Board for counsel and response, and then to the entire membership for a vote.

Pastoral moves were relatively few. Calvin Odhner was called to Pittsburgh and Pearse Frazier was called to Atlanta. This was a swapping of pulpits, something I'm not sure has happened before. Joel Glenn became the assistant in Durban, newly ordained Elmo Acton moved to Oak Arbor, and Coleman Glenn was hired at the Academy and will also help with young adults in the General Church.

Throughout the church there are wonderful steps forward as well as uncertainty about the future. This has probably always been the case. But it is wonderful to see the dedication, excitement, and peace that so many in the church experience as they seek to follow the Lord in His threefold Word.



Brian W. Keith
Executive Bishop
General Church of the New Jerusalem

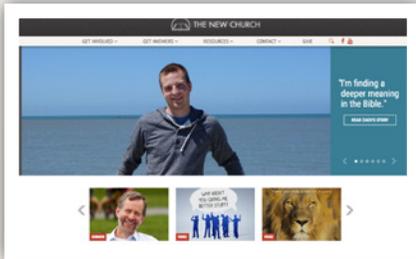


YEAR IN REVIEW

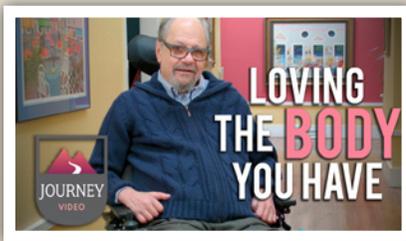
July 1, 2016- June 30, 2017

Cover photo of Kenya provided by Gretchen Keith.

269,298 visits to newchurch.org



- **2,156** subscribers for the Christmas Readings.
- **622** newcomers subscribed to various Journey Programs via email.
- **581** newcomers contacted us via email for various discussions or questions.
- **20,752** people connected around the globe on the New Church Facebook page.
- **2,293** people currently subscribe to receive the Daily Inspiration email from Swedenborg's Writings.
- **3,200** members and friends received the General Church e-newsletter.



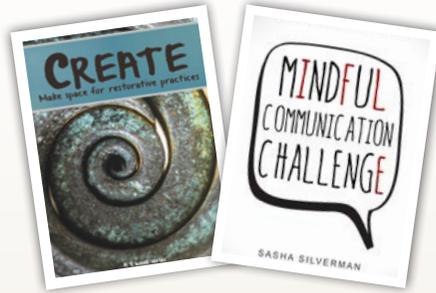
Journey Video, the New Church Journey YouTube channel, was launched to promote good in the world by encouraging spiritual reflection through people's experiences.



18 congregations

participated in one or more Journey Programs.

Journey Program publications such as Mindful Communication Challenge and Create can be found at the General Church online bookstore www.newchristianresources.org (pictured right)



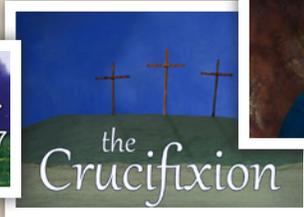
The **School Support team** produced and presented 10 professional development modules, with most delivered in multiple schools. Both the Glencairn and Asplundh Foundations have made significant grants to GCED in support of this effort. **The Glencairn**

Foundation has recently awarded GCED with another significant grant to continue this effort.



GCED hosted its first **Sunday School conference** serving 22 Sunday Schools, teachers, and pastors from 13 societies. An Education Leadership retreat was also held serving 18 administrators representing 11 New Church schools.

Left to right: Janet Carswell Lockard, Rachel Glenn, Rev. Peter Buss Jr., and Sarah Odhner organized a successful Sunday School Conference in April.



GCED's YouTube channel has reached **a million views** and over **1,000 subscribers.**

Society Milestones:

- 30th anniversary of the **Sower's Chapel** church, Freeport, PA (pictured right)
- 30th anniversary of the church building dedication of **Sunrise Chapel** in Tuscon, Arizona
- **Kempton New Church School** first four year high school graduation
- **Chapelle Eden** (Jesco Haveas, Abidjan) church dedication (picture right)
- **Chapelle le Puits de Jacob** (Vogan, Togo) church dedication



The General Church hosted **International Clergy Meetings** in June. Nearly 90 ministers

came together, representing congregations in the United States, Canada, West Africa, South Africa, Australia, Korea, India, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The purpose was to learn and build relationships with fellow clergy.



Rev. Peter Buss, Jr. led a baptism service for 40 children and adults and one confirmation in Ghana.



Ordinations in Kenya. Left to right: Rev. Bishop Keith, Samson Mogusu Abuga, George Omusu Magero, Emmanuel Juma, Fred Ang'asa.

The GC Strategic Plan called for two task forces to explore ways we could more effectively engage with young adults in the Church and draw more effectively on the gifts that the Lord has given to women. **The Youth Task Force** recommended the hiring of a clergy representative to coordinate with GC young people, as well as alumni from Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools. We are pleased to announce that the Rev. Coleman Glenn has been hired to do this work. The **Women's Participation Task Force** conducted a series of meetings and focus groups throughout the year, with the goal of presenting findings and recommendations to the Clergy and the GC Board. That work has been completed, and the full report can be found at: <http://about.newchurch.org/about/reports/>

DONOR PARTICIPATION

783 donors supported the General Church funds in FY17 bringing in over **\$795,000** in contributions.

497 donors were recognized as members of the **1890 Society**. Membership is granted to those who give to the General Church for 3 or more consecutive years. Over 200 of these donors have given to the General Church for 10 or more years. Thank you to all our General Church donors for their generous support.

MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Membership July 1, 2016..... | 5414 |
| New Members..... | 67 |
| Resignations..... | 5 |
| Deceased members..... | 48 |
| Membership June 30, 2017..... | 5428 |

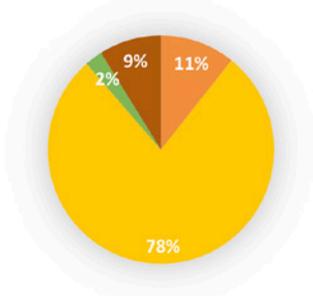
A complete membership report can be found in the November/December 2017 edition of New Church Life.

ORDINATIONS

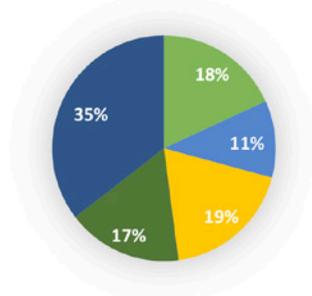
| Name | Degree | Location |
|------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| Elmo Acton | 1 | United States |
| Abel N'Guessan Amahin | 1 | Ivory Coast |
| Étienne Mogue Beugre | 1 | Ivory Coast |
| Mellon-Agnès René Lasme | 1 | Ivory Coast |
| Yaovi Kouglo Leopold Assiobo | 1 | Togo |
| Dong Y. Yang | 1 | South Korea |
| Fred Ang'asa | 2 | Kenya |
| Joel Glenn | 2 | South Africa |
| Emmanuel Juma | 2 | Kenya |
| George Magero | 2 | Kenya |
| Jared Buss | 2 | Canada |
| Alphonse Tehe Zoho | 2 | Ivory Coast |
| Timothy Zhou | 2 | China |
| Seoung Gil Kim | 2 | South Korea |

FINANCE

FY17 INCOME 4.91 M



FY17 EXPENSES 4.87 M



As we wrap up our year-end accounting, we are grateful to be able to report several very positive items in our financial report card to you, our members and friends, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017 (unaudited):

- Overall, we anticipate an operating surplus of roughly \$40,000. This result was supported by generous donors to the Annual Fund, planned gift receipts, and expense savings in IT, clergy travel and facilities, as well as temporary fluctuations in staff and program utilization.
- Total Annual Fund giving was down slightly from last year, due to one-time estate gifts received in the prior year from loving members who have passed into the spiritual world. Excluding estate gifts, contributions to the Annual Fund increased by 12% over FY16, and the number of donors for total giving were up about 10% from the prior year.
- Congratulations to the Kempton New Church for eliminating its grant from the General Church. This freed up resources to support other uses. General Church Education (GCED), with help from major foundation grants, continues to invest in the teacher development program, giving rise to an increase in education expenses from the prior year.
- We have increased the number of ministers (now 31) spreading and teaching the New Church doctrines to congregants in West Africa and Kenya resulting in increased spending for infrastructure.

Wendy Cooper, Controller & David Frazier, Executive Director